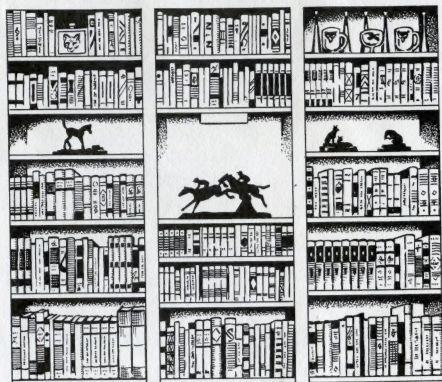


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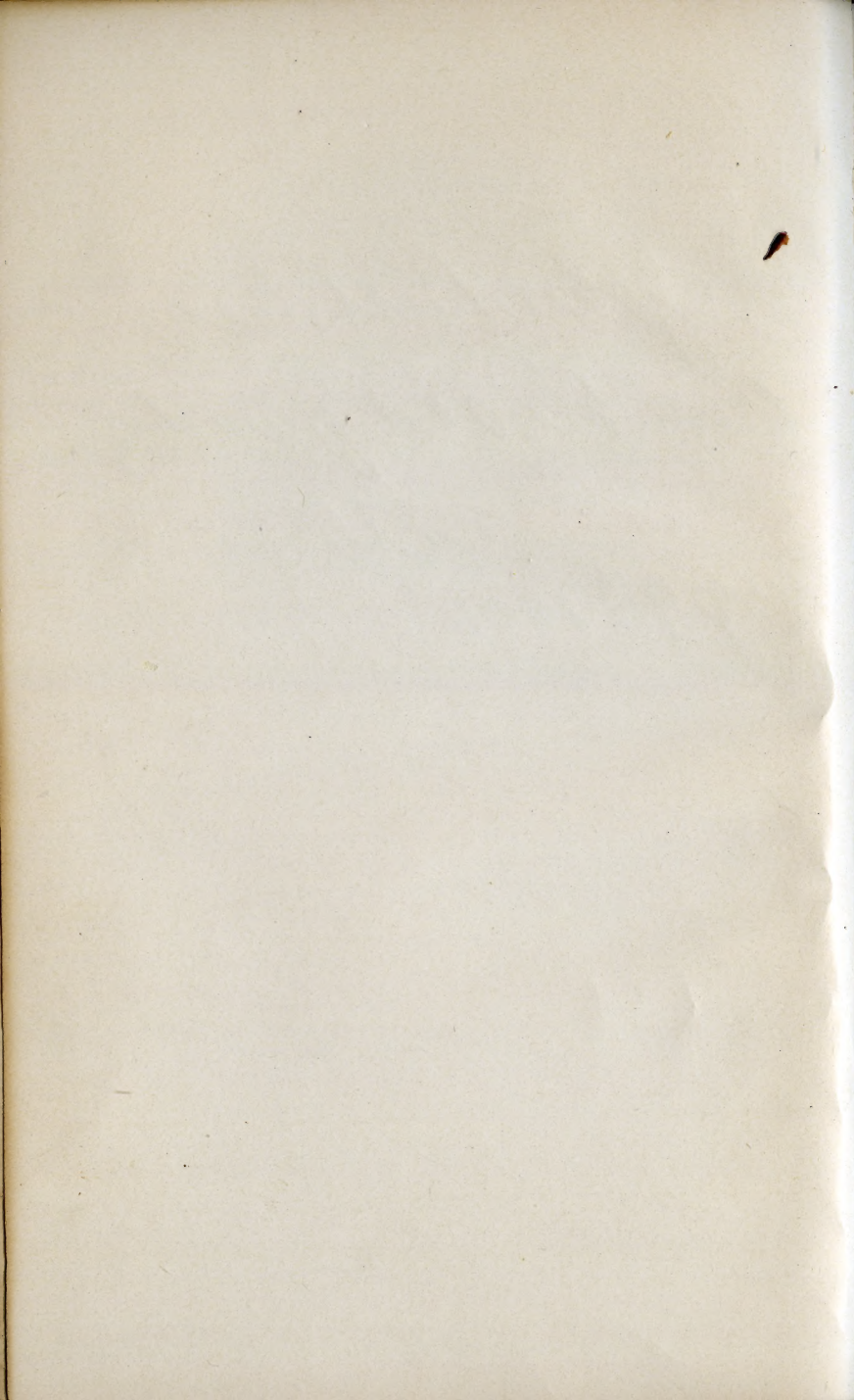
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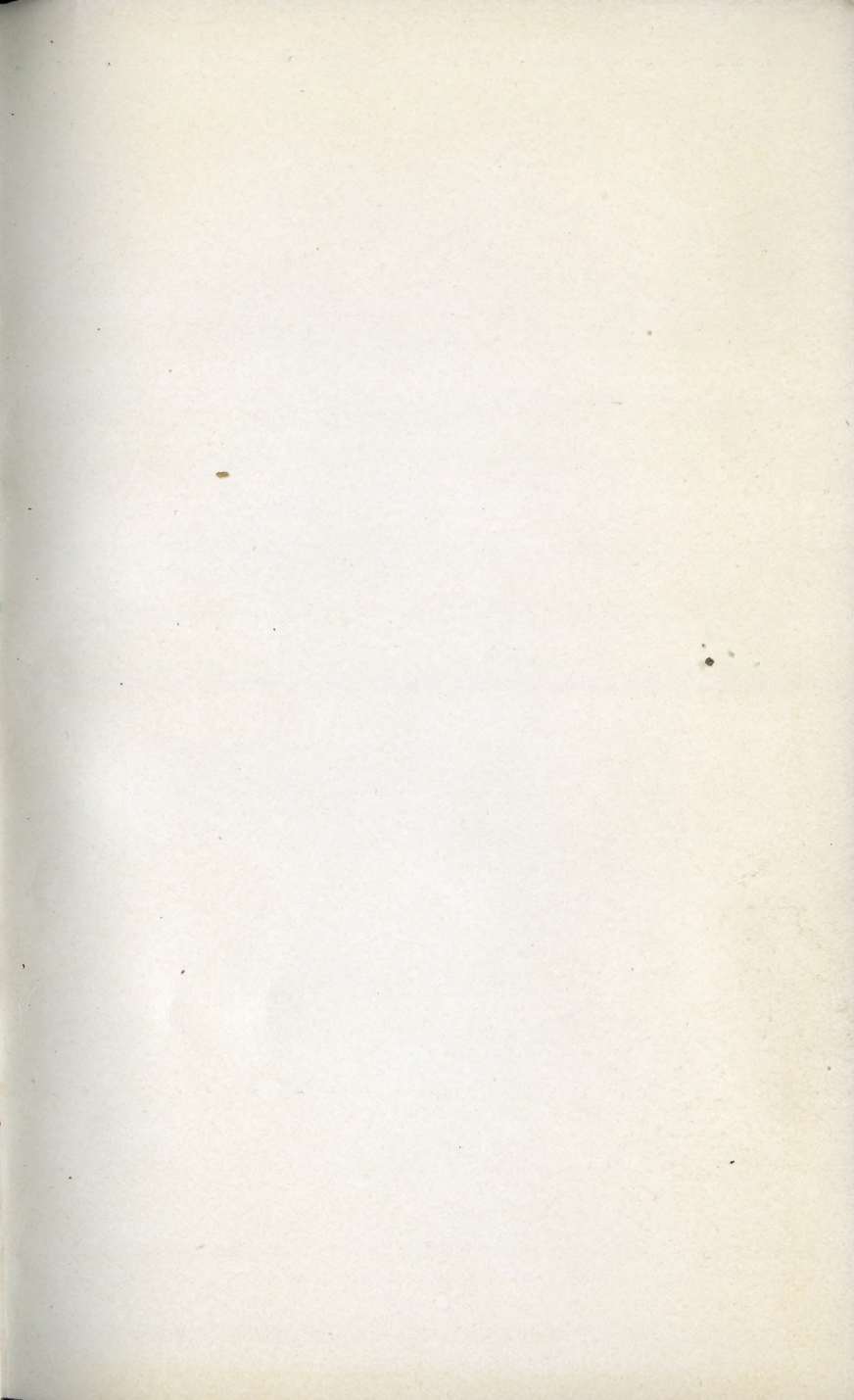
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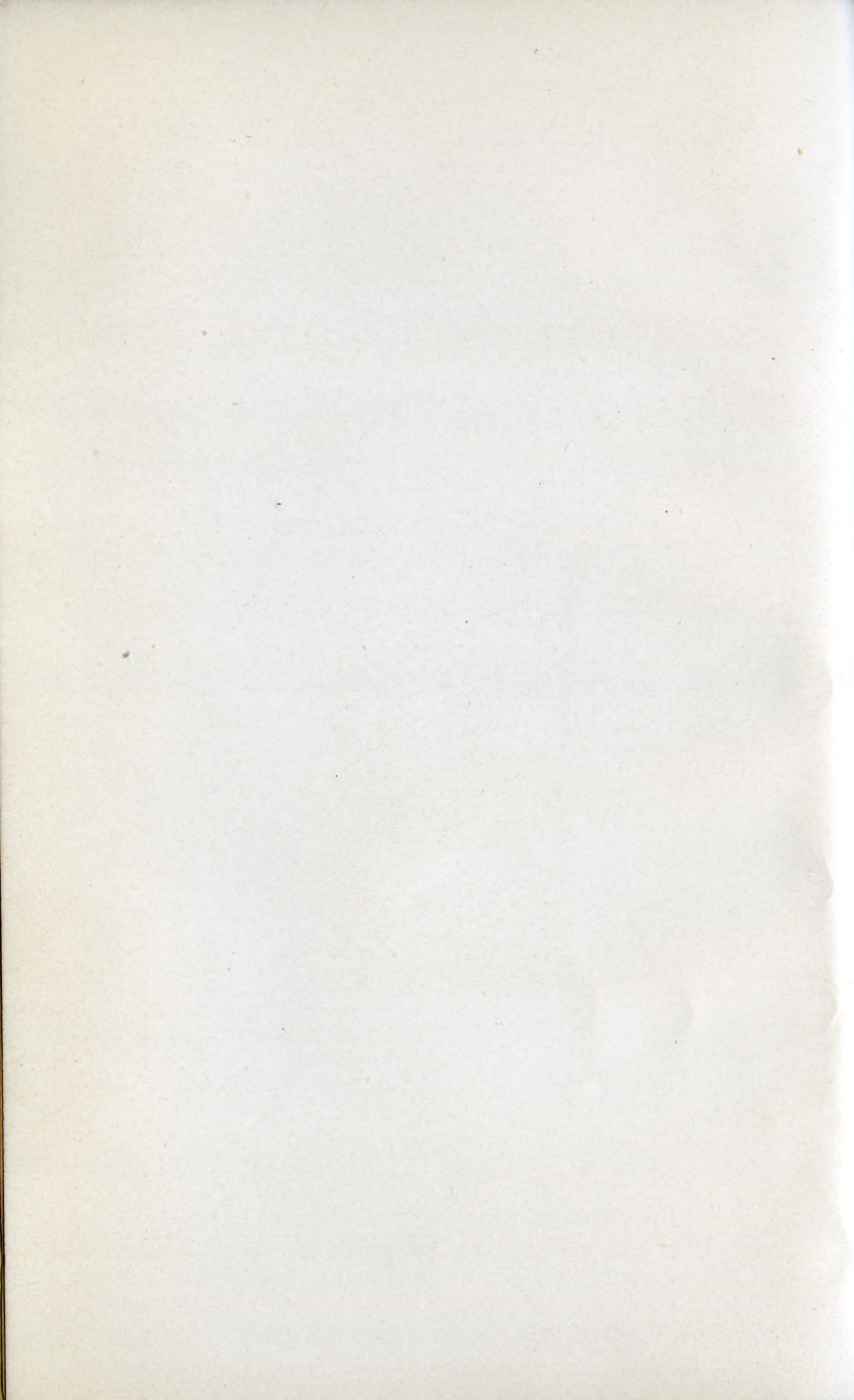
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Aug 9<sup>th</sup> 1905











# A COLORADO OUTING



1905  
The Smith-Brooks Press  
Denver





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# A Colorado Outing

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## I

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J. A. T.

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**L**ATE in the summer of 1871, a party of four young men, consisting of Bill Parenteau, Dick Williams, Jack Rolfson and Joe Addison, with Samuel Childs, a colored man, for cook, set out from Blackhawk, a little town some fifty miles west of Denver, for a hunting, fishing and prospecting trip. These young men were all under thirty years of age, and full of life, vigor and adventure.

We passed through and over the Middle range of the mountains to the North St. Vrain river, and located our camp at the foot of Long's peak, just where the south edge of Estes park commences. The beauties of this spot were discovered some five years later by a rather widely known Englishman—Lord Dunraven—who made himself no-



torious in the international yacht races of 1895, with his beautiful Valkyre; after being beaten in the first race decided not to play any more, gave up the race, as everybody will recollect, and shaking our American dust from his English shoes, left us for good and forever. Previous to that time he often came to this park, where he had located some six thousand acres of land, intending to make a game preserve, after the fashion of English parks. He is still the owner of this tract of land.

But to go back to our party: Bill Parenteau, a French American, was underground foreman of the celebrated Gunnell gold mine of Gilpin county. Dick Williams, a Cornishman, a miner and the discoverer of the Gilpin mine. Jack Rolfson, a South Carolinian, a college man, a graduate at the law school of his state, a lover of books, a musical enthusiast, and a dreamer; and Joe Addison, the writer of this story, was a Kentuckian and a country banker. Samuel Childs was taken along for a cook, but no one would have suspected this who had eaten anything that Sam had cooked.

There were no roads in those days that led into this portion of the mountains. We packed in through and over trails made by the deer, elk, Rocky Mountain sheep, bear and other wild animals. Each was mounted on a hardy mountain pony, and carried all the clothes, bedding, blankets, etc., needed for himself; besides, we had two pack mules, which carried our provisions, tent and tools. After three days' climbing over mountains, fording streams, and picking our way over fallen timber,



we reached the head waters of the North St. Vrain river, where it runs down from the great white, snowy mountain, noted as Long's peak. This peak rises over 14,000 feet above sea level. At the base of this mountain we came upon a clear piece of meadow, with an abundance of grass for the horses, and there we set up our small tent, which we were to use in case of rain.

The stream was one of the wildest and most picturesque I ever looked upon, rushing over large boulders, cutting through rotten granite walls, pitching over precipices down into deep pools of the clearest, most sparkling water.

While Bill and Dick brought their guns, as well as their picks and shovels, I brought fishing tackle, and Jack Rolfson, books. I think Jack had a rod and some flies, but I never saw him fish or shoot. He would lie upon the grass under the trees all the day long. He was a somewhat undersized man, with soft black eyes, short, black, curly beard and mustache, and a figure like a woman's, but very athletic. Some days, mounting his pony, he would ride up the stream, picking flowers, gathering wild raspberries, or whatever his fancy led him to do. One day he found a bed of mint, near the foot of a snow bank, and, breaking off a large piece of the icy snow, he brought it into camp in a large burlap sack that he had underneath his saddle, and when the rest of the party came in at evening he had a mint julep ready for us. Then, when the day was over and night came on, we would all lie stretched out on the grass in the tent, and Jack, his saddle

under his head for a pillow and the lantern by his side, would read aloud to us from Wild Western Scenes, Old Santa Fe Trail, Mark Twain, or something humorous. He knew what we liked, although when alone he read such works as Dante, Rousseau and the British poets. After an hour or so of reading, then all would turn out, not in—that is, we would go to bed underneath the trees. We never slept in the tent; it was only used in case of rain.

One night, when we were all stretched out in the tent waiting for Jack to take up his book, a tall, lean, sun-burnt looking man came to the door of the tent, and asked if we had seen any cattle around our camp that evening. We answered, no, we had not. Bill said, "Come in and take a seat on the grass—you look tired. Would you like a little whiskey?"—handing the bottle to him. He replied, "Thanks, I don't care if I do." We were telling stories, which seemed to interest the cowboy, but he never made a remark—some were pretty highly overdrawn, too. Finally, I said: "Boys, I don't think I ever told you my experience fishing on the North Platte. Well, the fishing was rather poor that summer up there. One morning I took my steel rod, and a buttered sandwich in my basket, and set off, expecting to be out all day. About noon I had half a dozen nice trout in my basket, and a severe rainstorm, with terrible thunder and lightning, came up. I left the creek and started across a clear piece of ground for a clump of trees, to get out of the rain. I was running with my rod held up in my right hand, when a streak of lightning struck the steel rod, dashing



me senseless to the ground. I came to in a short time, found I was not much hurt, and looking around I saw that my creel upon the ground was a bed of live coals, and there my trout were lying upon the coals beautifully broiled. My sandwich was ready toasted, and, to show you the eccentricity of electricity, the bones had been taken out of the fish and made into toothpicks and laid beside the fish, and a more dainty lunch I never had. What do you think of that?"

The cowboy couldn't stand this last story and turned on his side, laid his hand on his pistol, and said: "I will bet a dollar that's a lie." I turned to him and said: "My friend, I don't wish to win your money by betting on a sure thing—but if old Bill Shakespeare was alive, I could prove it by him. Did you know him?" The cowboy said, "No; where did he range his cattle?" There was silence in the tent; then, turning, he said good evening, and went out into the night.

Dick Williams, the Cornishman, was of powerful build and strength, a miner and more particularly a prospector. He had discovered a number of gold veins in the gold camps of Gilpin county, and he always sold his prospects as soon as any one showed a disposition to buy, and off he would go to look for another. When tired of roving over the mountains with pick and shovel, he would lay them aside, saying he was out of luck, and would take his rifle and go on a hunt, nothing caring whether he got anything or not. He would go sometimes three or four days without killing any-

thing, saying he never saw anything to shoot. We believed at such times he was not hunting at all, but simply sitting around on the rocks dreaming of the big mine he was destined to find some time. Again he would bring in the hindquarters of a black-tail deer, and its hide, saying he could have gotten another one or perhaps two, if he had wanted to. Once he brought in a beautiful mountain lion about the size of a young dog; he skinned it carefully, took it home and had it mounted. Another day, he came in just as the sun had sunk behind Long's peak with a most remarkable load on his shoulders. At a distance of two hundred yards from the camp we saw him coming, or what we took to be Dick. At first, he seemed to have turned into a deer, horns and all; in fact, exactly as though he was trying to impersonate a deer. His appearance caused a great commotion, some warning him to keep off, one yelling "Where did you get that?" and when he staggered into camp and laid down the hides and heads of two of the largest species of Rocky Mountain mule deer, we saw that the heads were interlocked with each other, or linked together by their horns in such a curious and





unaccountable way that they could not possibly have been unlocked without breaking off the horns of one or the other of them. Dick had at first thought they were alive and engaged in a fight, but discovered at once that neither of them moved, and on looking closer found them dead, and to all appearances had been so for a week or more. These kings of the woods had evidently had a desperate fight for the mastery, and in the death struggle had so interlocked their horns that it was impossible for either to loose himself from the other, and thus they were found, both having perished by starvation or lack of water. It had taken Dick hours and hours to skin them, sever their heads from their bodies, and some four hours or more to bring them into camp through the thick brush and trees, as he was most anxious to preserve the heads intact. They were afterwards brought to Denver, and are now to be seen in the Colorado Museum of Natural History in the City Park. But what a fate, what an ending for these proud "Monarchs of the Glen!" What a cruel struggle, what a long and intense fight, before death released them, chained to each other for days and nights without food and water, yet surrounded by both, struggling, fighting with the madness of demons to be free from each other. Imagine if you can their suffering, when never before had they been restrained in their wild freedom in any way; and then, too, one may have died hours or days before the

other, and the living was locked to the dead, until he, too, gave up the ghost. We all congratulated Dick heartily on the find.



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## II

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**B**ILL Parenteau was a quiet, powerful man, of great personal courage. He had shown this several years before when dealing with a race riot and fight that had occurred between the Irish and Cornish miners on the Gunnell mine. He was fond of shooting large game, such as deer, elk, sheep, etc., and he frequently went off hunting for them by himself, just as the spirit moved him. One Sunday morning, when the rest of us were laying off, washing, mending up and resting, Bill got his horse and said he was going over to the head of Wolf canon to get an elk, announcing that he had seen some around there, but they were a great ways off. When we next saw the brave Bill he was near death's door, but still brave as a lion; and this is what happened to him:

When he reached the head of the canon he lariat-ed out his horse in a good grass spot, looked over his trusty Winchester, and, having put a large hunting knife in his boot, took the trail leading down into the canon. He had not gone over a hundred yards before he ran upon a large she bear, lying directly in the path, with two young cubs. She sprang up and came with a rush upon him. So close was she that he could not make sure of his aim, but fired, striking her at the top of her head

between her ears, but the ball glanced off and did no harm. Before he could fire a second time she was upon him. He struck her once with the butt of his gun, but in an instant she had dashed it to the ground with him, and was upon him, seizing him by the left shoulder and arm. With her powerful claws she cut his head and tore his scalp from the right side of his head over to the left, striking out the right eye with a blow, tearing away at his left shoulder at the same time. Bill said to himself: "Now I am a goner, unless I can get to my knife and stick her to the heart." He got out his knife as he lay beneath her, and ran it into her heart, not knowing how successfully, but he continued to force in his weapon, and in almost a moment he was fairly drenched with her blood and the bear rolled over dead. Bill, with his scalp hanging down over his left ear, the left arm crushed and bleeding, dragged himself to his horse, pulled himself up on to the horse by the strength of his right arm, and rode two miles to a saw mill, where he found a man and a boy. He laid down in a bunk, and directed the man to tie a rope under his arm and across his shoulder as tight as he could stand it, to stop the flow of blood. He also directed the boy to take his horse and how to find our camp, and told him to tell us his condition. When the messenger arrived at our camp we asked if Bill had sent for us to come, and he said no, just said: "Tell them I got hurt with a bear and can not get to camp." It was like him. He left it to us to come or not. We saddled our horses and in an hour we had covered the seven

miles, and the three of us were with him. We found him somewhat weakened, but chipper and always brave. He told how the fight occurred just as I have related it here. Then he added: "Well, boys, I got the best of the bear in a square fight; but I suppose I will die if I don't get this blood stopped and have my arm treated by a doctor, and as there is no doctor nearer than Denver, eighty miles away, there is no chance for me, I guess."

Perfect silence followed this speech, for a few moments; then spoke up Jack Rolfson, the book-worm, the dreamer, the man who never seemed to do anything, or to want to. He said: "No, Bill; you don't die if there is a doctor in Denver who can save you. In twenty minutes I will leave; it is now four o'clock in the afternoon. I will be in Denver in ten hours; that will be two in the morning. It will require one hour to get a doctor and team, and at four I will start back. I will give myself twelve hours to return. It is all I can hope to do, over rough mountain roads; so hold the fort, Bill, for just one day, twenty-four hours, and I will have the doctor at you for weal or for woe. If I am not here to-morrow at four, send out a man on the road to meet me, for something will have happened. We must save the bravest man who ever fought a bear."





And with "Good-bye" and "Good luck," he was off on the best horse in the camp.

As soon as he had gone Bill said: "Now, boys, we must have those two cubs, and that old grizzly's hide will be worth several hundred dollars, and I want that skin as a *pleasant* reminder of our trip. Get your horses; make a small box, with slats at the top, so the cubs can get plenty of air; take a few yards of rope and go at once, and you are sure to find the cubs around their dead mother, and capture them alive."

We got the box, Dick carried it, and off we went to capture the cubs, and, as it was but two miles away, we were but a little while in reaching the location of the fight. When nearing the place described by Bill, we got off our horses, walked carefully toward the trail, and soon saw the dead bear. Then we concluded that one of us must get around to the other side of the trail, in case the cubs were there, to prevent their escape. Dick went around and I stood still, and directly he appeared on the other side of the bear and very near to her, and beckoned to me to come up and bring the box, which I did. We moved very cautiously, and, when we got up to the dead bear, there lay the little cubs by the side of their dead mother, fast asleep. They were about the size of a three months' puppy. Dick then said to me, "You must seize the one near you and I will the other. Grab him tight by the back of the neck, and put him in the box;" and I did that, and before the cubbies were awake they were covered safely in the box, hiding, with frightened

looks. Then we took our knives and went to work carefully to skin the enormously grizzly. Dick had done such a job before—not I. We soon got through, and Dick, cutting out a large piece of the loin of the bear, wrapped it up in the hide, told me to mount my horse, and he would put it up behind me. This he did, after having an awful time with the horse, who objected to such a load. Then Dick got up and reached down, got his box of bears, and, as it was nearly dark, we started for the saw mill, and arrived with our game in good order. Bill was rejoiced over our success.

To turn back for a moment to Jack's ride for the doctor. It was forty miles from the saw mill to Bangs' ranch, and Jack had to ride this distance before he could get any change of horses or food. He was six hours in reaching this ranch, losing an hour, as he had hoped to do the distance in five hours. There he got a fresh horse and a good one, and after leaving the rough mountain roads behind was now out on the level plains, and made the next twenty miles in two hours and ten minutes, arriving at old Fort Lupton, where he got another horse, which took him to Denver in two hours and forty minutes, thus making the trip in nine hours and fifty minutes. He had made up his mind to get the best surgeon to be had, which, unfortunately, in this case, was the biggest man in Denver, Dr. Bandreth, surgeon-in-chief of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway. His weight was about three hundred pounds, and it was not an easy matter to get him to consent to go into the mountains. He said he had no right

to go out of Denver and take individual cases, and the railroad might need his services at any time; besides, it would kill him to take this ride in time to be of benefit to the man, or to save his life. Jack pleaded with him, saying, among other things, that Bill deserved the best surgeon and attendance in the world, and that he had made the bravest fight that any man ever made, etc., etc. Dr. Bandreth yielded, and Jack secured a spring buckboard and a pair of good horses, was ready in an hour, but, feeling that he must have something to eat and a little rest, went to the old Planters House, and got a cup of coffee and some bread and butter, threw himself on a lounge and slept an hour. Then, rising, he drove to Dr. Bandreth's house, roused him up, and in a few minutes they were going north toward old Fort Lupton at a rapid gait.

The valley roads were fine, and they made the first drive in two hours, and to Bangs' ranch, at the foot of the mountain, in three hours more, leaving them seven hours for the mountain trip of forty miles; but the horses must have food and rest, and Dr. Bandreth said that he must have something to eat, or he could not go another mile. He went to the cook himself and ordered her to make some coffee, fry a dozen eggs and some ham. "What," said the cook, "a dozen eggs?" "Yes," he replied; "the other man will want one or two. Also boil half a dozen hard ones for us to take along, as they come handy on the trip." It was nearly ten o'clock when they started out on the mountain road toward the saw mill, and to the brave fellow lying there,



whose life was surely ebbing away unless he could get relief, and that soon, Dick Williams and I doing all we could for him, but when four o'clock came and no Jack or doctor, he said: "It is all up with me, boys. I guess Jack has been detained by something, or he would have been here before this." I spoke a word to Dick, and then left the room and mounted my horse, which I had already saddled, and set out down the road at a gallop, to see what I could learn of Jack. About three miles from the mill I met Jack and the doctor coming at little better than a walk, the horses thoroughly fagged out, and Jack urging them on. I could not refrain from a wild yell of delight, saying: "Good for you, old boy. The road is better somewhat from this on; push the horses all you can. Bill is holding out manfully."

The doctor spoke up and said: "But what's the use? I will die myself before I get there."

I told Jack I would ride back and let Bill know how near they were. In fifteen minutes more we were all saying "Bravo for Jack," as they came up. He had covered the distance of one hundred and sixty miles in twenty-five hours. We helped the doctor out of the buckboard, as he was completely knocked out. It was no easy thing for a man weighing three hundred pounds, and fifty years old, to take such a ride as that. The first thing he said was: "Get me a bucket of water, for a wash, and have a kettle of hot water ready." He then asked where Bill was, and went up to the cot, took his wrist in his hand and spoke the encouraging word:

"You are all right, old fellow, up to this time, and we will see what we can do for you."

Without going further into details of the doctor's actions, he very soon had him under the influence of an anæsthetic, and in an hour "beautifully patched up," as Dick expressed it, for this veritable Sir John Falstaff, both in size and appetite, was also the finest surgeon in the state. As soon as he had finished the operation, he came outside, where Dick, Jack and myself were standing, and said: "Whether this man's arm, or even his life, can be saved, depends on his getting to the hospital at Denver in the quickest time possible. I see out there a hay wagon. A bed of hay will have to be made and tied securely on that wagon, he placed upon it, and started for Denver as soon as the moon rises. He can reach Bangs' ranch by early morning, and there he must remain until the sun goes down, and then go on. The heat of the sun and jolting would surely cause blood poisoning, and this trip must be made in the night time. A man must also ride with him to hold him on the bed. Now, get this all ready, and wake me up when you are prepared to start. I must have some food and sleep before I go back."

So we went to work and did everything as he wished, woke him up at ten o'clock and gave him a hearty supper. After which we put Bill on his hay bed, which had been tied to the hay rack; then lifted the rack, with Bill upon it, to the wagon, very smoothly, and without much pain to the poor fellow. Then we put up in front of Bill on the wagon his cubs, and his grand bear robe, that he had so

bravely deserved. With a good team and driver, and Jack once more filling the breach, against all opposition, and sitting at Bill's head, the doctor driving the buckboard behind, the start was made that ended in placing Bill in a Denver hospital on the third morning after they left, where he remained five weeks, and recovered without losing his arm, but his right eye was gone. A word more and Bill disappears from this story. I met him a month after he left the hospital, and said to him: "Well, Bill; I guess you will let the bear go by you next time." All he answered was: "No damn bear can run me off the trail."



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### III

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**D**ICK and I went back to our camp with rather heavy hearts. We did not expect Jack to return to us, as he intended to stick to Bill, and so made up our minds to break up camp within a few days and go home. Dick said he wanted to look around a little more, and do some further prospecting work on a vein he had found in the mountains, and I continued to fish a part of each day, and lay around camp, reading Jack's books, which he had left behind. I never had such grand trout fishing in all my life, and that, too, amidst the wildest and most beautiful scenery ever a fisherman looked upon, and at the same time enjoying the most fascinating sport that a man ever engaged in. Each day I could find new pools, and deep, smooth riffles that would have delighted the heart of an Izaak Walton, or Doctor Henry Van Dyke. What can be more fascinating or glorious, as with rod and fly you follow up the cool, clear, dashing stream, as it bursts from the mountain's base, and at each throw snare a speckled beauty or bold and gamey rainbow?

“Just as the dubious point where with the pool is mixed the trembling stream; or where it boils around the stone, or from the hallowed bank reverted plays—in undulating flow, there—throw with

eagerness the delusive fly. And as you lead it round in artful curve, with eye attentive, mark the springing game."

But to finish my story: We resolved to stay two or three days longer, and I concluded to try and bring some of my friends the results of my outing, and the day before we were to leave I started out rather early to a place some half a mile away from the camp, where the stream was divided by a small island covered with willows. I carried, beside rod and creel, a hunting knife in the leg of my long boot and a lariat around my shoulders, which I used sometimes in dangerous places, where the stream was very deep and swift and the bank too steep to fish from with safety. I had stopped at the head of the pool and had taken some eight or ten fine trout, and thought I would cross over to the island and see what the other arm of the river looked like. I had walked a few rods through the willows when I saw quite a disturbance ahead of me, and stopped. Not more than thirty rods away a huge brown bear rose up out of the willows, standing on his hind legs, and looked directly at me. I turned and made for the stream with all the speed that paralyzed fear could make. I crossed, and, turning, saw the bear following me through the water. I rushed through the low brush that lined the bank and out into the open, and saw a fair sized tree on the side of the mountain, two hundred yards away, that I thought I might reach. I glanced back, and the bear was coming out of the bushes where I had, and right on after me, and somewhat faster, it seemed to me,

than I was going. When within fifty yards of the tree another look at him convinced me he would get there about the same time I did, or probably before, so, to lighten my load and increase my speed, I dropped my rod, threw off my creel, and my hat went with it, and I hastened my efforts to the utmost. As I got to the tree the bear got to my creel and stopped. I scrambled up the tree and reached a dead limb some ten feet above the ground; and drew myself up on it, and from there I could reach the forks of the tree, about fifteen feet from the ground. When I got up there I looked and saw that the bear had shaken the fish out of my creel, and was eating them, which he did pretty quickly. He then came on to the tree, walked around and around it several times, then started to climb up after the same manner I had, and reached up, seizing the dead limb with his arms, and tried to pull himself up, when the limb broke off close to the body of the tree, and he fell to the ground on his back and head, the wind knocked out of him. He got up rather slowly and commenced walking around and around the foot of the tree, acting as though he thought I had played a trick on him, and I could have laughed outright at his sheepish look if I had not been so scared I could not open my mouth. After walking around and around the tree some little time, he went back to the creel, smelled all around it, went to my hat, took it in his mouth and shook it like a pup would an old slipper. I could have killed him if I had been far enough away to be safe and had a gun. I suppose he thought I carried trout in my hat as well as in my



creel. There was no doubt but what he was hungry, and, not getting any fish out of the hat, he came back to the tree again, and stood on his hind legs and reached up toward me as far as he could reach. I made up my mind I must cut his paws off if he came up that tree, but he made no attempt to climb up again, but continued to walk around and around, and would then stop, stand on his hind feet and reach up as far as he could. All at once the thought struck me, Why not try to lariat him? I acted on the thought at once, unwound the lariat from my shoulder, fastened one end around a near fork of the tree, got the noose ready and waited for him to come directly under it, and when next he stood up I dropped it down over him and pulled it with all the strength of desperation, and caught his fore-arms just behind his big paws. I tightened the rope to the utmost upon the limb, and found I had him,



standing on his toes, and, unless he could spring up and bite the rope, I was safe, his neck being so much shorter than his arms he could not possibly reach the lariat. He jumped and jumped until he was worn out and spent from the exertion. Then I looked over the situation and found that if I climbed up some

ten feet higher I could go out on a big limb, and by a good drop reach the ground. I did this, and found myself safely on the ground; then, being convinced in my own mind that he could not get loose, I said to myself: "Old fellow, you have scared me out of ten years' growth; I would like to take your hide or your claws as a trophy." So I pulled my long knife and approached the tree cautiously, keeping it between me and the bear. He seemed to be swinging helplessly, and I got squarely against the tree and gave a lunge with my knife around it, aiming at his heart. As I did so the bear gave a last struggle and his head fell over to one side, and he was as limp as a rag, and did not move. I waited for some ten minutes or more, and as he did not move I felt sure that he was dead. I then went up close to him, and certainly he was a dead bear. I concluded to cut his claws and take them to camp, and get Dick to come out and help skin him. I reached up and cut the rope and the bear fell over on the ground, not moving a muscle; but the suspicious thing was that he was not bleeding at all, as far as I could see, and, after studying over the situation for some little time, I concluded it was safer to run into camp and get Dick to come out and help me skin him. I had never had any experience in that line. I struck camp pretty quick, and told Dick with great excitement all about it. He was very incredulous and started out with me at once, and as we went along he roared with laughter at my account of the whole affair. When we came in sight of the tree I did not see anything

around or near it. We went on to the tree, but no bear was there. My rod, creel and hat were gone. I said, "Why here was where I left him," and we turned and looked around, about and everywhere, and directly down a narrow path, leading to the water, we saw the most astonishing sight that I ever beheld. We saw that bear walking on his hind legs toward the water, with my creel over his shoulder, my rod in his hand, and my hat on his head.

Dick turned to me and said: "Look; yes, you slaughtered him, Joe; no doubt about that;" and then fell upon the ground and roared and roared with laughter, until I thought he would die. I turned and started for the camp, saying: "Come on, Dick; don't be a fool."

Well, having lost my fish, rod, creel, hat and bear, we packed up and left for home. But as to whether that bear was possuming, or fainted from long exhaustion, or had heart failure for the time being, I could never determine.







